

# United States District & Bankruptcy Court

District of Idaho

May 13, 1999

## **Electronic Courtroom User Manual *for* 801 E. Sherman, Pocatello Idaho**

### **Overview:**

The District and Bankruptcy Courtrooms in the Pocatello U.S. Courthouse located at 801 East Sherman in Pocatello Idaho are equipped with a modern audio/video suite to facilitate creation of the court record and present evidence to the court and Jury. These systems include infra-red technology for assisted listening and language interpretation and are designed to accept computer input from counsel computers and a variety of portable equipment.

This documentation is intended to provide you with the information you need to take full advantage of the equipment in the Pocatello courtrooms. This document should also serve as a reference to brief your clients and witnesses.

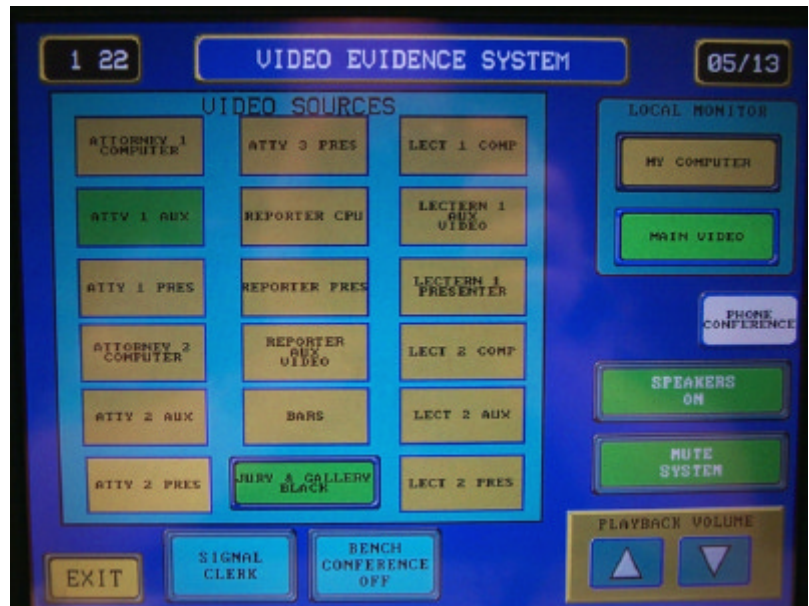
This document will cover all electronic components in the courtroom. For your convenience those systems are addressed in separate sections by function.



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## AMX Touchscreen Control Panel (Two Main Courtrooms only)

The courtroom Audio and Evidence Presentation Systems are fully controlled via identical AMX Touchscreen panels at the Judge's and Clerk's benches. These panels control all functions of the system and will receive modifications to control lighting and projector screens as well. These units control which location within the courtroom may present video evidence, as well as control of the sound system and audio teleconferencing. These panels also include the ability to display a test pattern and blank or "video mute" the jury monitors. These touch sensitive display panels are manufactured by AMX and are discussed throughout this document.



## Audio Systems

The courtroom audio systems were installed as an integrated part of the courthouse. The microphones on the counsel tables are only the most visible part of the system. Each courtroom has speakers in the corresponding chambers so the Judge's staff can listen while performing other duties. All courtrooms also have infra-red interpretation systems as well as audio reinforcement for hearing impaired participants. Each system also has audio teleconferencing, allowing the Teleconference to be conveniently made part of the court record.

### Microphones:

There are a variety of microphones throughout the courtrooms. All system microphones, regardless of style, have a unique characteristic sound pickup pattern. The pattern is a heart-shaped pattern called a cardioid with the sound pickup pattern extending straight out from the tip of the microphone, reducing to a zero or "null" pickup towards the rear of the microphone. This pattern maximizes the sound pickup from the speaker while eliminating unwanted noise and feedback from the courtroom speakers. The typical microphone of this type picks up sound from an approximate angle of 50 degrees from center, or about 100 degrees total, so it is important the microphone user speak as directly into the microphone as possible. Average speaking distance to the microphone should be between 10 and 16 inches.



The microphones at counsel tables have touch pads which mute the microphone as long as the touch pad is pressed. Normal operation resumes when the touch pad is no longer pressed. The microphones are highly sensitive and will pick up the slightest whisper so be sure to mute them during consultation with your client. Do not point the microphones up as they are extremely sensitive and will pick up the audio from the ceiling speakers creating a feedback situation. If you have any questions about the sensitivity of these microphones, try one of the Phonic Ear headsets that will be discussed in the “listening assistance” section. You will find these quite remarkable and you will be amazed at the ability to pick up every

whispered conversation in the courtroom.

The Judge’s benches in the two large courtrooms also have sidebar microphones. The judge may elect to press the Bench Conference button on the control panel so that pink noise is heard through the jury speakers to further prevent the bench conference from being overheard.



The microphones at the witness stands are quite sensitive but when preparing your witnesses you still need to remind them to speak clearly and directly at the microphone, at a distance of no more than 12". If you wish to have the witness speak directly to the jury please instruct the witness to adjust the microphone so that they are still speaking into it. These microphones cannot pick up the witness if the witness is speaking in a different direction.

### **Listening Assistance System:**

Each courtroom is equipped with a listening assistance system consisting of a phonic Ear Infrared emitter, which is mounted on the front wall of the courtroom. Up to 20 battery operated headset receivers are also available for listeners. The system uses low frequency lightwave (infrared) transmission, similar to that used with TV and VCR remote controls, and permits all headset users to hear courtroom procedures in an amplified manner. This amplification is quite effective, as even a whisper in the courtroom can be heard on the headsets.



### **Headsets:**

Each headset (see picture below in the interpretation section) has a separate volume adjustment on each ear and it is important that the user not set the volume level too high in order to prevent ear discomfort when someone is speaking loudly into any of the room microphones. Aside from the



on/off switch and separate volume controls, the headsets also have an A/B switch. The headsets must be set to channel A for listening assistance, channel B is used for interpretation as discussed in the interpretation section of this document. The clerk has a supply of rechargeable AAA batteries for these headsets.

### **Interpretation System (Two Main Courtrooms only):**

Each courtroom is equipped with an interpreter system consisting of a Phonic Ear infrared emitter, which is mounted on the front wall of the courtroom (pictured in the assisted listening section) and two microphones. Up to 20 battery operated headset receivers are also available for listeners. The system uses low frequency lightwave (infrared) transmission, similar to that used with TV and VCR remote controls, and permits all headset users to hear interpreted discussion in an amplified manner. This amplification is quite effective and the interpreter can speak in a whisper and will be heard on the headsets.

#### *Headsets:*



Each headset has a separate volume adjustment on each ear and it is important that the user not set the volume level too high in order to prevent ear discomfort when someone is speaking loudly into the interpreter's microphone. Aside from the on/off switch and separate volume controls, the headsets also have an A/B switch. The headsets must be set to channel B to listen to the interpreter, channel A is used for listening assistance as discussed in the assisted listening section of this document. The clerk has a supply of rechargeable AAA batteries for these headsets.

#### *Interpreter's control console:*

To operate the Interpreter System, the interpreter must plug his/her headset/microphone into the microphone jack on the interpreter's panel and adjust the headset so that the microphone element is within one-half to one inch from his or her mouth. The Interpreter's control console consists of the HEADSET/SPEAKER switch, a HEADSET VOLUME control, and a MUTE switch. For normal interpretation, the interpreter should have the HEADSET/SPEAKER switch in the HEADSET position, so those listeners wearing the wireless headsets can hear the interpretation. For "broadcast"



of the interpreter's microphone over the courtroom speakers the HEADSET/SPEAKER switch should be switched to the SPEAKER position. If at any time the interpreter needs to temporarily turn off his or her microphone, the interpreter may press the MUTE switch. The audio will remain muted until the MUTE switch is pressed again. The headphone portion of the Interpreter's headset is used to monitor courtroom audio from all courtroom microphones. The interpreter may vary the level of this audio by adjusting the HEADSET VOLUME control.

A second microphone is provided at the witness stand for interpretation. This microphone will only function in the "broadcast" mode (sending the audio out over the speakers) and does not have a control console. This is the only microphone available for interpretation in the Grand Jury room and the microphone is located under the clerk's bench (immediately in front of the witness stand) rather than in the witness stand.

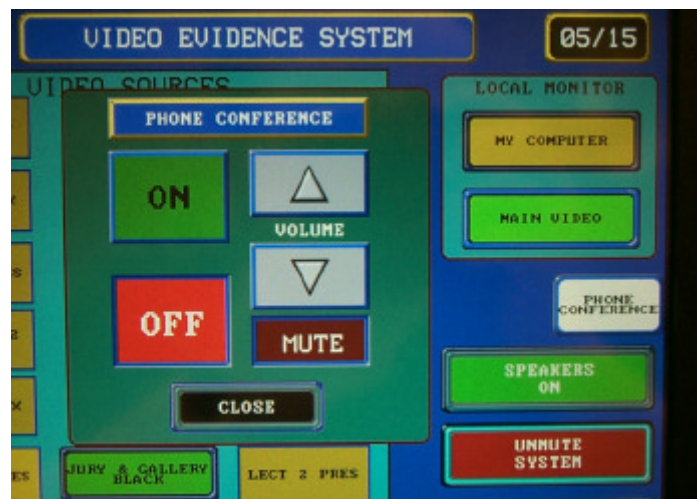
### **Audio Teleconference:**

Teleconferencing using the Gentner GT-300 Conference Unit, permits the Judge and other participants in the courtroom to listen to, and hold conversations with, parties outside the courtroom. Control of this unit is via the AMX Touchscreen on either the Judge's or Clerk's bench.

To establish a conference call, the courtroom deputy must first establish the connection using the courtroom telephone set designated for that purpose. The courtroom deputy places the called participants on hold and then must select the Audio Conference menu on the AMX Touchpanel, pressing the button marked "ON." Immediately, a soft chime tone will be heard over the courtroom speakers and the caller will be connected to the courtroom audio system. Normal courtroom conversations as picked up by the courtroom microphones will be heard by the caller and the caller's voice will be heard over the courtroom loudspeaker system. If it is necessary to change the volume level of the caller's voice, it may be adjusted by repeatedly pressing the volume control buttons on the AMX control panel. It is very important to note that the participants outside of the courtroom can only hear discussions spoken clearly and directly into the courtroom microphones.

If at any time during the call the courtroom deputy wishes to prevent the caller from hearing the courtroom conversation, he or she may press the MUTE button on the phone conference section of the AMX control panel once. This mute button will then remain in effect until pressed again, at which time the conference will be restored to full two-way operation. When MUTE is in effect the courtroom can still hear the party on the other end of the telephone conversation.

To disconnect the conference, simply announce to the outside party that you are hanging up and press the OFF button on the AMX control panel. The call will be immediately terminated.



## **Additional Audio Notes:**

For your reference, you should know that audio is distributed throughout the courthouse. For example, each courtroom has audio feeds to the respective chambers suite so that personnel can continue their other duties while listening to the courtroom proceedings. Audio can also be distributed to the detention cells on the first and second floor (two main courtrooms only). This requires the courtroom deputy manually flip a switch located between the audio equipment racks. This switch is normally set to the off position so no audio is directed to the holding cells by default. This was designed to accommodate an unruly or disruptive defendant. Additionally, the audio from the District Court courtroom is distributed to the Jury orientation room to facilitate overflow spectator seating. Finally, audio is distributed from the District Court courtroom to a jack in the Press/Media room on the first floor.

### *Auxiliary Inputs at Front Counsel Tables:*

There are also inputs at the two front counsel tables, labeled “Aux Audio.” These “RCA style” connectors allow counsel to bring portable tape decks into the courtroom and play the audio over the loud speaker system. The clerk’s bench also has an auxiliary audio input using a 1/4" stereo jack



under the counter. The volume levels of these inputs can be adjusted by repeatedly pressing the volume control arrows on the AMX Touchscreen “playback volume” controls. The jack at the left of the attached picture is the auxiliary audio input jack. Real Time Court Reporting jacks are also available at most counsel tables. Please contact the court reporter for more information.

## **Video Systems (Two main courtrooms only)**

The video evidence presentation system is also fully integrated into the courtrooms and consists of a variety of components, all controlled via the AMX Touchscreen panels at the Clerk’s and Judge’s benches. The system also has the ability to receive computer inputs and accept input from a variety of portable devices. A video printer resides at the clerk’s bench for printing and an annotation tablet is provided at the lectern for making annotations to any of the video evidence. The witness can also annotate the evidence using a finger via the Touchscreen at the District Court witness stand and a light pen at the Bankruptcy Court witness stand. The jury video can be “blanked “ or muted from the AMX Touchscreen until it is determined appropriate for viewing by jurors. Counsel tables have monitors to display the video, as well as the clerk, judge and witness. An AmpPro 5000 DLP projector is mounted in the rear wall of the District Court courtroom and a large 37" monitor is provided in the Bankruptcy courtroom to allow the jury to view the video.



## WolfVision Evidence Presenter:

The evidence presenter is also frequently known by the terms visual presenter and document camera. This tool is used for presenting documents, slides, negatives, X-rays, maps and even three-dimensional objects.

To use the document camera, press the power ON button. The light reflected onto the platform through the mirror system shows the area which will be displayed. Pressing the ZOOM buttons will enlarge or shrink the area displayed, and allow the user to greatly magnify the image. The control panel also has buttons for focusing the image, but experience with the system indicates that it is rarely, if ever, necessary to adjust the focus. The iris adjustment may compensate for under-exposed or over-exposed negatives or slides, but again is rarely necessary. If adjustments are made, you should press the ON button when finished to restore the original iris and focus settings. When using written documents, the button marked "data down text" should be pressed to activate the text enhancement feature. This will darken the image and make the text more readable. Two presets are available which may be used to automatically shift to commonly used settings of the zoom, focus, iris and text enhancer features. After the desired settings are activated, pressing either preset button for four (4) seconds will assign those settings to that button. Normally, the presets will be set to accommodate the use of written documents, with "Preset 1" used to maximize the readability of 8½ by 11" documents and "Preset 2" used to show the entire document. The display platform can be turned over to display a white side, which is useful for displaying slides, negatives and x-rays. The fan will continue to run after the power is switched off to cool the projector lamp..





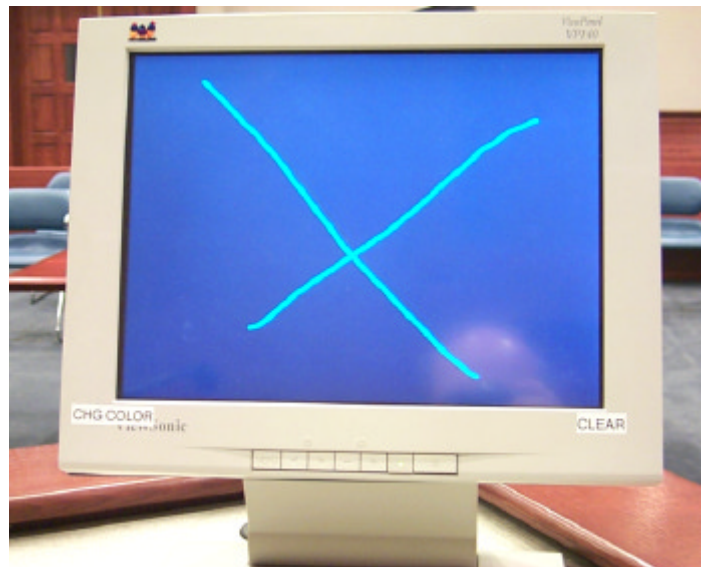
### **Canon Evidence Presenter:**

The Canon Evidence presenter operates much the same as the WolfVision model. This unit adds an automatic focus and additional lighting. This unit has lights on arms above the display platform as well as lights in the base for negatives, slides and x-rays.



### **Touch Panel for Witness (District Court only):**

All video evidence is displayed at the witness stand on a flat panel LCD display, much like the display on a typical notebook computer except this version is enhanced to include touch capabilities. This special Touchscreen allows the witness to comment on the evidence presented. The witness creates annotations by drawing right on the display using the tip of his or her finger. The witness must press firmly on the display while annotating. The witness can change colors by pressing in the lower left hand corner of the display, clear the most recent annotation (undo) by pressing the upper right hand corner, or clear all annotations by pressing in the lower right hand corner. The witness can “drop” an arrow on screen by tapping with his or her finger.



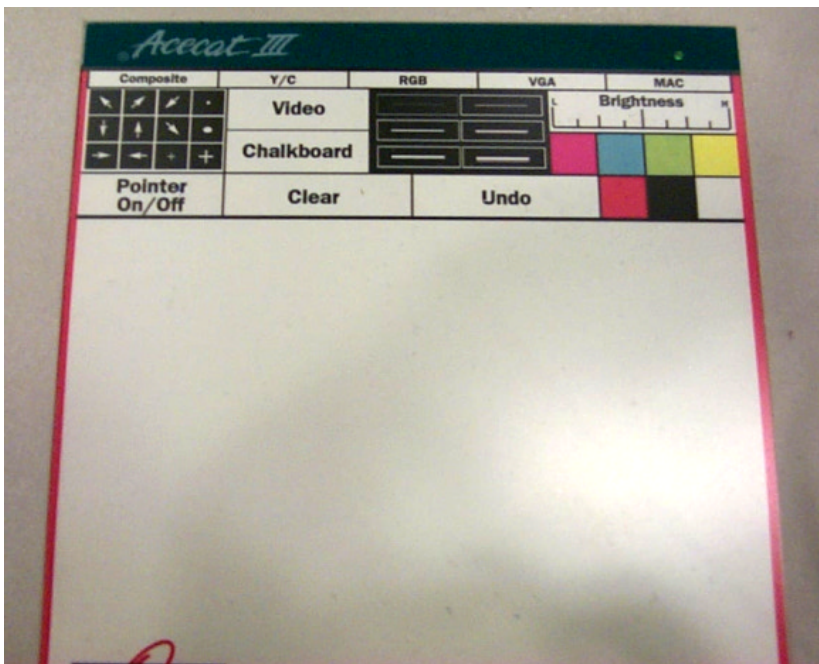


### **Monitor with Light Pen (Bankruptcy Courtroom Only):**

The Bankruptcy courtroom has a simpler mechanism for the witness to create annotations on the video evidence. This is called a light pen and the witness can put the pen right up to the screen and draw, much as they would with a crayon and paper. They can “drop” an arrow by simply tapping the pen on the display, and there is an undo button in the side of the pen.

### **Annotation Tablet at Lectern:**

The lectern has the most complex device for annotating the video evidence. This device requires practice to achieve a reasonable level of competence. All tools for annotating the video evidence discussed in this document will work with any video source including the computer, document camera and VCR. As you can see from the annotation tablet pictured at right, you can control many aspects of the annotation process, including many of the annotation features used at the witness stand. For example you can turn the pointer off (useful when viewing a VHS tape recording without an “arrow” positioned in the display area), or you can clear all annotations or just the last one (undo). You can change the colors, the brightness of the annotations, the thickness of the lines and the pointer style. These features are all controlled by simple touching the pointer to the appropriate spot on the tablet. In the case of the brightness control, the pointer must be dragged across left or right across the control to change the intensity.



The tablet also has a chalkboard mode to allow freehand drawings. After using the chalkboard mode, don’t forget to press the video mode to restore the original video source (such as a computer input, VCR or document camera) to the displays in the courtroom.

Annotations are made by simply drawing on the white area of the tablet using the attached annotation pen. The location of the drawing pen on the video evidence is determined by following the pointer on the screen and once positioned properly, press the pen down lightly to the surface and drawing. It may be preferable to simply place an

arrow on the display to draw attention to some specific area or paragraph on the display rather than attempt a freehand drawing. This can be done by positioning the pointer to the target location on screen and pressing either of the buttons on the annotation pen.

### **VCR at Lectern:**

The Video Cassette Recorder in the Lectern equipment rack is a high quality Super VHS model. This unit produces excellent freeze frame and other special effects, thus allowing for a very high quality image during annotation.

### **Additional Video Inputs at Counsel Tables:**

The picture to the right illustrates the standard jacks at the counsel tables. These connectors or jacks are present at the front two tables in the two main courtrooms.

#### **Composite Video**

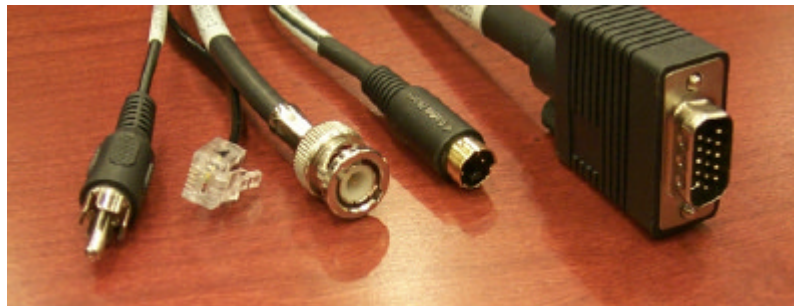
The composite video is for devices such as VCRs, document cameras or any other portable low resolution devices that are brought into the courtrooms. Since many of these portable devices have RCA connectors, the clerk has a supply of adaptors to translate between styles. The clerk will select the “Atty Aux” input source at your location to display the video from any device you have plugged into that jack.

#### **S-Video**

The S-Video is capable of producing slightly higher quality output than a composite video signal. Most of the newer higher resolution document cameras and Super VHS VCRs have S-video outputs. The clerk will press an “Atty Pres” button on the Touchscreen to display the video from any device you have plugged into that jack.

#### **Computer Video**

This jack should look familiar. Plug this into the video output from your computer. The system can display video at resolutions as high as 1024 by 768 pixels. Caution should be advised at these higher resolutions however as the image will be quite small. A resolution no higher than 600 by 800 pixels is recommended. Some of the newer notebook computers do not have sufficient



Standard Jacks at counsel Tables from Left to right: RCA connector for Auxiliary Audio in, Phone jack for computer modem, BNC style jack for composite video input, S-Video connector for video input, Computer video input.



output power to drive the system. This is a design decision intended to extend the length of the battery. The clerk has an extra amplifier to assist with this problem. This is just one of the reasons you need to test with your equipment before your hearing begins. The large District Court courtroom also has computer inputs at two of the tables on the back row. Real Time Court Reporting jacks are also available at most counsel tables. Please contact the court reporter for more information.

### **Video Printer:**

This system does not contain any memory device of any sort, so the only way to preserve the record is through the use of the video printer located at the clerk's bench. The printer prints any image on the screen, as well as any annotations. It requires about 75 seconds to print so counsel should continue on with the next point while waiting for the print to finish.



### **Final Courtroom Note:**

If a single piece of advice could be offered, it would be to practice with the courtroom systems so that you are completely comfortable when you appear. Practice with the actual equipment you will be using (the EXACT equipment, not a “similar” model) so that potential incompatibilities or other questions are resolved well in advance of your court date. You can contact the court at (208) 478-4123 to schedule time in the courtroom.